

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 ACDA-19 IO-13

USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 OMB-01 AID-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CI, PINS, PINT, MILI

SUBJ: BACK TO WORK

REF: SANTIAGO 4379

1. SUMMARY. CHILE'S NATIONAL HOLIDAY, SEPT 18, PASSED PEACEFULLY; THE TRADITIONAL SECOND DAY OF CELEBRATION AND PARADES ON SEPT 19 YIELDED TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT PRESSURE FOR GETTING ON WITH THE JOB OF "RECONSTRUCTION." SECURITY REMAINS A MATTER OF CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

2. PRUDENCE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE LOOK OF THINGS LED TO CANCELLATION OF THE TRADITIONAL MILITARY PARADES ON SEPT 19, WHICH WAS DECLARED A NORMAL WORKDAY, AND CHILEANS IN GENERAL MUTED THE NORMAL JUBILATION. A "LITURGICAL ASSEMBLY AND TED DEUM" WAS HELD ON THE 18TH, AT WHICH CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT AND JEWISH LEADERS JOINED WITH THE MILITARY JUNTA, ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL, AND THE THREE LIVING EX-PRESIDENTS OF CHILE, IN PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE AND EXHORTATIONS TO NATIONAL UNITY IN THE FACE OF THE TASKS AHEAD. FORMER PRES GABRIEL GONZALEZ VIDELA WAS OVERCOME WITH JOY TO THE

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POINT WHERE HE "COULD NOT FIND WORDS" TO THANK THE ARMED FORCES FOR

RESCUING CHILE, ETC. EX-PRES JORGE ALESSANDRI RODRGUEZ LIMITED HIMSELF TO AN ABRAZO FOR GENERAL PINOCHET AND A "NO COMMENT." FORMER PRES BUT STILL ACTIVE POLITICIAN EDUARDO FREI ADMITTED ONLY THAT HE HAD COME TO PRAY WITH THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS FOR PEACE AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY.

3. PDC PRES AYLWIN WENT SOMEWHAT FURTHER IN A STATEMENT QUOTED IN EL MERCURIO SEPT 18, JUSTIFYING THE ARMED FORCES TAKOVER AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A BLOODY LEFTIST PURGE OF ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP AS CHARGED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN THEIR JUSTIFICATIONS. AYLWIN RECALLED THE DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS OF THE PDC WHICH HAD TRIED TO SAVE CHILE THROUGH CONVERSATIONS WITH ALLENDE UP TO THE END.

4. TODAY, SEPT 19, NORMALITY IS THE WATCH-WORD. THE SECOND DAY OF THE USUAL TWO-DAY HOLIDAY WAS CANECLLED IN FAVOR OF AN INTENSE EFFORT TO GET EVERYONE BACK TO WORK, AND THE MORNING TRAFFIC WAS HEAVY. THE PDC'S LA PRENSA JOINED EL MERCURIO AND LA TERCERA ON THE NEWSSTANDS, RADIO STATIONS JOINED THE ARMED FORCES NET ONLY FOR PERIODIC ROUNDUPS, AND CHANNEL 9 TV CAME ON AGAIN. THE DIARIO OFICIAL ALSO RESUMED PUBLICATION. GASOLINE, HEATING FUELS, BREAD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS ARE INCREASINGLY AVAILABLE. BLACK MARKET ACTIVITIES APPARENTLY DECLINED SHARPLY, AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE OF SEVERE THREATS OF PUNISHMENTS. SEPT 19 QUOTATION OF PARALLEL MARKET CURRENCY RATE WAS 1600 - 1800 ESCUDOS FOR US DOLLAR CHECKS DOWN FROM 2500 JUST BEFORE COUP. THE ARMED FORCES CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THE RETURN TO NORMALITY, THEIR COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY EXCEPT FOR ISOLATED POCKETS OF RESISTANCE IN SANTIAGO, AND CALLED FOR SOLIDARITY, TRUST AND COOPERATION FROM THE WORKERS, WHILE RELEASING EVIDENCE TO THE PRESS OF THE ALLEGED CORRUPTION AND DEADLY PLANS OF THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT.

5. THE CLAIM TO FIRM POLITICAL CONTROL AND AMELIORATION OF SOME SHORTAGES APPEARS REASONABLY JUSTIFIED BASED ON THE ADMITTEDLY LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US. SECURITY CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM, BUT A LIMITED ONE, APPARENTLY. NUMEROUS PRESS ACCOUNTS DESCRIBE CACHES OF ARMS AND MARXIST PROPAGANDA FOUND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND INCIDENTS ARE REPORTED SUCH AS THE DAMAGING OF 72 BUSES OF THE RANCAGUA LINE WHICH TRANSPORTS THE EL TENIENTE COPPER MINE WORKERS BETWEEN THE MINE AND THEIR HOMES. THIS LINE, ACCORDING TO EL MERCURIO'S MILITARY SOURCES, WAS A MARXIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONGHOLD, AND THE DAMAGE PRESUMABLY TOOK PLACE DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COUP. NIGHTFALL IN SANTIAGO BRINGS THE CURFEW AND THE BEGINNING OF ISOLATED GUNSHOTS AND REPORTS OF SHARP FIREFIGHTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY, BUT DAYTIME SECURITY SEEMS COMPLETE. CALLS TO TURN IN ILLEGAL ARMS WITHOUT FEAR OF PENALTY CONTINUE, AND THE MILITARY HAVE WARNED OF UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS IN MILITARY UNIFORM SOLICITING MONEY AND FOOD. CURFEW RESUMES IN SANTIAGO SEPT 19 AT 2000, WITH THE MORNING LIFTING HOUR YET TO BE

ANNOUNCED.

6. THE MILITARY JUNTA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH ADM MERINO'S PRESS CONFERENCE PROMISE OF A WHITE PAPER REVEALING "INCREDIBLE THINGS" ABOUT THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT, AND A MINISTRY OF ECONOMY STATEMENT THROUGH A SPOKESMAN THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICY WILL BE ANNOUNCED WITHIN A FEW DAYS. WHILE EFFORTS ARE APPARENTLY UNDERWAY TO FIND NOMINEES FOR VACANT AMBASSADORSHIPS, LA TERCERA CARRIES A STORY DATED SEPT 18 FROM WASHINGTON OF THE NAMING OF ADMIRAL EBERHARD, THE NAVAL ATTACHE OF THE CHILEAN MISSION THERE, AS CHARGE.

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